

Shirt & Tie

Dr. CARRICO. The President was being wheeled into trauma room one when I saw him.

Mr. SPECTER. Who else, if anyone, was present at that time?

Dr. CARRICO. At that time, Dr. Don Curtis, Martin White.

The CHAIRMAN. Was he a doctor, too?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir; Miss Bowron.

Mr. SPECTER. Who is Miss Bowron?

Dr. CARRICO. She is one of the nurses on duty at the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. Who was the first doctor to actually see the President?

Dr. CARRICO. I was.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, what did you observe as to the condition of President Kennedy when you first saw him?

Dr. CARRICO. He was on an ambulance cart, emergency cart, rather. His color was blue white, ashen. He had slow agonal respiration, spasmodic respirations without any coordination. He was making no voluntary movements. His eyes were open, pupils were seen to be dilated and later were seen not to react to light. This was the initial impression.

Mr. SPECTER. What was the status of his pulse at the time of arrival?

Dr. CARRICO. He had no palpable pulse.

Mr. SPECTER. And was he making any movements at the time of arrival?

Dr. CARRICO. No voluntary movements, only the spasmodic respirations.

Mr. SPECTER. Was any heartbeat noted at his arrival?

Dr. CARRICO. After these initial observations we opened his shirt, coat, listened very briefly to his chest, heard a few sounds which we felt to be heartbeats and then proceeded with the remainder of the examination.

Mr. SPECTER. In your opinion was President Kennedy alive or dead on his arrival at Parkland.

Dr. CARRICO. From a medical standpoint I suppose he was still alive in that he did still have a heartbeat?

Mr. SPECTER. What action, if any, was taken with respect to the removal of President Kennedy's clothing?

Dr. CARRICO. As I said after I had opened his shirt and coat, I proceeded with the examination and the nurses removed his clothing as is the usual procedure.

Mr. SPECTER. Was President Kennedy wearing a back brace?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes; he was.

Mr. SPECTER. Would you describe as precisely as you can that back brace?

Dr. CARRICO. As I recall, this was a white cotton or some sort of fiber standard brace with stays and corset, in a corset-type arrangement and buckles.

Mr. SPECTER. How far up on his body did it come?

Dr. CARRICO. Just below his umbilicus, as I recall.

Mr. SPECTER. How far down on his body did it go?

Dr. CARRICO. I did not examine below his belt at that time.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you at any time examine below his belt?

Dr. CARRICO. I did not; no, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you know if anyone else did?

Dr. CARRICO. Not in a formal manner.

Mr. SPECTER. What action did you take by way of treating President Kennedy on his arrival?

Dr. CARRICO. After what we have described we completed an initial emergency examination, which consisted of, as we have already said, his color, his pulse, we felt his back, determined there were no large wounds which would be an immediate threat to life there. Looked very briefly at the head wound and then because of his inadequate respirations inserted an endotracheal tube to attempt to support these respirations.

Mr. SPECTER. Specifically what did you do with respect to the back, Dr. Carrico?

Dr. CARRICO. This is a routine examination of critically ill patients where you haven't got time to examine him fully. I just placed my hands just above the belt, but in this case just above the brace, and ran my hands up his back.

Mr. SPECTER. To what point on his body?

Dr. CARRICO. All the way up to his neck very briefly.

Mr. SPECTER. What did you feel by that?

Dr. CARRICO. I felt nothing other than the blood and debris. There was no large wound there.

Mr. SPECTER. What source did you attribute the blood to at that time?

Dr. CARRICO. As it could have come from the head wound, and it certainly could have been a back wound, but there was no way to tell whether this blood would have come from a back wound and not from his head.

Mr. SPECTER. What action did you next take then?

Dr. CARRICO. At that time the endotracheal tube was inserted, using a curved laryngoscopic blade, inserting an endotracheal tube, it was seen there were some contusions, hematoma to the right of the larynx, with a minimal deviation of the larynx to the left, and ragged tissue below indicating tracheal injury.

The tube was inserted past this injury, and the cuff inflater was connected to a Bennett machine which is a respiratory assistor using positive pressure.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe briefly what you mean in lay terms by a cuffed endotracheal tube?

Dr. CARRICO. This is a plastic tube which is inserted into the trachea, into the windpipe, to allow an adequate airway, adequate breathing. The cuff is a small latex cuff which should prevent leakage of air around the tube, thus insuring an adequate airway.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you continue, then, to describe what efforts you made to revive the President.

Dr. CARRICO. After the endotracheal tube was inserted and connected, I listened briefly to his chest, respirations were better but still inadequate.

Dr. Perry arrived, and because of the inadequate respirations the presence of a tracheal injury, advised that the chest tube was to be inserted, this was done by some of the other physicians in the room.

At the same time we had been getting the airway inserted Dr. Curtis and Dr. White were doing a cutdown, venous section using polyethylene catheters through which fluid, medicine and blood could be administered.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe in lay language what you mean by a cut-down in relationship to what they did in this case?

Dr. CARRICO. This was a small incision over his ankle and a tube was inserted into one of his veins through which blood could be given, fluid.

Mr. SPECTER. Is the general purpose of that to maintain a circulatory system?

Dr. CARRICO. Right.

Mr. SPECTER. In wounded parties?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes.

(At this point, Representative Ford entered the hearing room.)

Mr. SPECTER. Would you now proceed again to describe what else was done for the President in an effort to save his life?

Dr. CARRICO. Sure. Dr. Perry then took over supervision and treatment, and the chest tubes were inserted, another cutdown was done by Dr. Jones on the President's arm.

Fluid, as I said, was given, blood was given, hydrocortisone was given. Dr. Clark, the chief neurosurgeon, Dr. Bashour, cardiologist, was there or arrived, and a cardiac monitor was attached and although I never saw any electroactivity, Dr. Clark said there was some electrical activity of the heart which means he was still trying to—

Mr. SPECTER. What is Dr. Clark's position in the hospital?

Dr. CARRICO. He is chief of the neurosurgery department and professor of the neurosurgery.

Mr. SPECTER. Dr. Carrico, will you continue to tell us then what treatment you rendered the President?

Dr. CARRICO. When this electrocardiac activity ceased, close cardiac massage was begun. Using this, and fluids and airway we were able to maintain fairly good color, apparently fairly good peripheral circulation as monitored by carotid and radial pulses for a period of time. These efforts were abandoned when it was determined by Dr. Clark that there was no continued cardiac response. There was no cerebral response, that is the pupils remained dilated and fixed; there was evidence of anoxia.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe in lay language what anoxia means?

Dr. CARRICO. No oxygen.

Mr. SPECTER. Was cardiac massage applied in this situation?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir; it was, excellent cardiac massage.

Mr. SPECTER. Were bloods administered to the President?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir.

(At this point, Mr. Dulles entered the hearing room.)

Mr. SPECTER. Dr. Carrico, was any action taken with respect to the adrenalin insufficiency of President Kennedy?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir; he was given 300 milligrams of hydrocortisone which is an adrenal hormone.

Mr. SPECTER. And what was the reason for the administration of that drug?

Dr. CARRICO. It was recalled that the President had been said to have adrenal insufficiency.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, at what time was the death of the President pronounced, Doctor?

Dr. CARRICO. At 1 o'clock.

Mr. SPECTER. Who pronounced the death of the President?

Dr. CARRICO. Dr. Clark, I believe.

Mr. SPECTER. Was that a precise time fixed or a general time fixed for the point of death?

Dr. CARRICO. This was a general time, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. What, in your opinion, was the cause of death?

Dr. CARRICO. The head wound, the head injury.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe as specifically as you can the head wound which you have already mentioned briefly?

Dr. CARRICO. Sure.

This was a 5- by 71-mm defect in the posterior skull, the occipital region. There was an absence of the calvarium or skull in this area, with shredded tissue, brain tissue present and initially considerable slow oozing. Then after we established some circulation there was more profuse bleeding from this wound.

Mr. SPECTER. Was any other wound observed on the head in addition to this large opening where the skull was absent?

Dr. CARRICO. No other wound on the head.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you have any opportunity specifically to look for a small wound which was below the large opening of the skull on the right side of the head?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir; at least initially there was no time to examine the patient completely for all small wounds. As we said before, this was an acutely ill patient and all we had time to do was to determine what things were life-threatening right then and attempt to resuscitate him and after which a more complete examination would be carried out and we didn't have time to examine for other wounds.

Mr. SPECTER. Was such a more complete examination ever carried out by the doctors in Parkland?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir; not in my presence.

Mr. SPECTER. Why not?

Dr. CARRICO. As we said initially this was an acute emergency situation and there was not time initially and when the cardiac massage was done this prevented any further examination during this time this was being done. After the President was pronounced dead his wife was there, he was the President, and we felt certainly that complete examination would be carried out and no one had the heart, I believe, to examine him then.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe, as specifically as you can then, the neck wounds which you heretofore mentioned briefly?

Dr. CARRICO. There was a small wound, 5- to 8-mm. in size, located in the lower third of the neck, below the thyroid cartilage, the Adams apple.

Mr. DULLES. Will you show us about where it was?

Dr. CARRICO. Just about where your tie would be.

Mr. DULLES. Where did it enter?

Dr. CARRICO. It entered?

Mr. DULLES. Yes.

Dr. CARRICO. At the time we did not know—

Mr. DULLES. I see.

Dr. CARRICO. The entrance. All we knew this was a small wound here.

Mr. DULLES. I see. And you put your hand right above where your tie is?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir; just where the tie—

Mr. DULLES. A little bit to the left.

Dr. CARRICO. To the right.

Mr. DULLES. Yes; to the right.

Dr. CARRICO. Yes. And this wound was fairly round, had no jagged edges, no evidence of powder burns, and so forth.

Representative FORD. No evidence of powder burns?

Dr. CARRICO. So far as I know.

Representative FORD. In the front?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you now described that wound as specifically as you can based upon your observations at the time?

Dr. CARRICO. I believe so.

Mr. SPECTER. And your recollection at the time of those observations?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes; an even round wound.

Mr. DULLES. You felt this wound in the neck was not a fatal wound?

Dr. CARRICO. That is right.

Mr. SPECTER. That is, absent the head wound, would the President have survived the wound which was present on his neck?

Dr. CARRICO. I think very likely he would have.

Mr. SPECTER. Based on your observations on the neck wound alone did you have a sufficient basis to form an opinion as to whether it was an entrance or an exit wound?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir; we did not. Not having completely evaluated all the wounds, traced out the course of the bullets, this wound would have been compatible with either entrance or exit wound depending upon the size, the velocity, the tissue structure and so forth.

Mr. SPECTER. Permit me to add some facts which I shall ask you to assume as being true for purposes of having you express an opinion.

First of all, assume that the President was struck by a 6.5 mm. copper-jacketed bullet from a rifle having a muzzle velocity of approximately 2,000 feet per second at a time when the President was approximately 160 to 250 feet from the weapon, with the President being struck from the rear at a downward angle of approximately 45 degrees, being struck on the upper right posterior thorax just above the upper border of the scapula 14 centimeters from the tip of the right acromion process and 14 centimeters below the tip of the right mastoid process.

Assume further that the missile passed through the body of the President striking no bones, traversing the neck and sliding between the large muscles in the posterior aspect of the President's body through a fascia channel without violating the pleural cavity, but bruising only the apex of the right pleural cavity and bruising the most apical portion of the right lung, then causing a hematoma to the right of the larynx which you have described, and creating a jagged wound in the trachea, then exiting precisely at the point where you observe the puncture wound to exist.

Now based on those facts was the appearance of the wound in your opinion consistent with being an exit wound?

Dr. CARRICO. It certainly was. It could have been under the circumstances.

Mr. SPECTER. And assuming that all the facts which I have given you to be true, do you have an opinion with a reasonable degree of medical certainty as to whether, in fact, the wound was an entrance wound or an exit wound?

Dr. CARRICO. With those facts and the fact as I understand it no other bullet was found this would be, this was, I believe, was an exit wound.

Mr. SPECTER. Were any bullets found in the President's body by the doctors at Parkland?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Was the President's clothing ever examined by you, Dr. Carrico?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir; it was not.

Mr. SPECTER. What was the reason for no examination of the clothing?

Dr. CARRICO. Again in the emergency situation the nurses removed the clothing after we had initially unbuttoned enough to get a look at him, at his chest, and as the routine is set up, the nurses remove the clothing and we just don't take time to look at it.

Mr. SPECTER. Was the President's body then ever turned over at any point by you or any of the other doctors at Parkland?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Was President Kennedy lying on the emergency stretcher from the time he was brought into trauma room one until the treatment at Parkland? He was concluded?

Dr. CARRICO. Yes; he was.

Mr. SPECTER. At what time was that treatment concluded, to the best of your recollection?

Dr. CARRICO. At about 1 o'clock.

Mr. SPECTER. At approximately what time did you leave the trauma room where the President was brought?

Dr. CARRICO. I left right at one when we decided that he was dead.

Mr. SPECTER. And did the other doctors leave at the same time or did any remain in the trauma room?

Dr. CARRICO. I left before some of the other doctors, I do not remember specifically who was there. I believe Dr. Baxter was, Dr. Jenkins was still there, I believe. And I think Dr. Perry was.

Mr. SPECTER. You have described a number of doctors in the course of your testimony up to this point. Would you state what other doctors were present during the time the President was treated, to the best of your recollection?

Dr. CARRICO. Well, I have already mentioned Dr. Don Curtis, the surgery resident; Martin White, an interne; Dr. Perry was there, Dr. Baxter, Dr. McClelland, a member of the surgery staff; Dr. Ronald Jones, chief surgery resident; Dr. Jenkins, chief of anesthesia; several other physicians whose names I can't remember at the present. Admiral Burkley, I believe was his name, the President's physician, was there as soon as he got to the hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. What is your view, Dr. Carrico, as to how many bullets struck the President?

Dr. CARRICO. At the time of the initial examination I really had no view. In view of what we have been told by you, and the Commission, two bullets would be my opinion.

Mr. SPECTER. Based on the additional facts which I have asked you to assume—

Dr. CARRICO. Yes, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. And also based on the autopsy report from Bethesda—

Dr. CARRICO. Right.

Mr. SPECTER. Which was made available to you by me.

Dr. CARRICO. Right.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, who, if any one, has talked to you representing the Federal Government in connection with the treatment which you assisted in rendering President Kennedy at Parkland on November 22?

Dr. CARRICO. We have talked to some representatives of the Secret Service, whose names I do not remember.

Mr. SPECTER. On how many occasions, if there was more than one?

Dr. CARRICO. Two occasions, a fairly long interview shortly after the President's death, and then approximately a month or so afterwards a very short interview.

Representative FORD. When you say shortly after the President's death, you mean that day?

Dr. CARRICO. No, sir. Within a week maybe.

Mr. SPECTER. And what was the substance of the first interview with the Secret Service which you have described as occurring within 1 week?

Dr. CARRICO. This was a meeting in Dr. Shires' office, Dr. Shires, Dr. Perry, Dr. McClelland and myself, and two representatives of the Secret Service in which we went over the treatment.

They discussed the autopsy findings as I recall it, with Dr. Shires, and reviewed the treatment with him, essentially.